

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

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SUBJECT: 1977 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON ALGERIA

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF 1977 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT
ON ALGERIA. QUOTE:

DURING THE LATTER HALF OF 1976, THE PROCESS OF THE
CONSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMIZATION OF THE REGIME OF PRESIDENT
HOUARI BOUMEDIENNE WAS SPEEDED UP. IT WAS COMPLETED
EARLY IN 1977. A NEW CONSTITUTION WAS ADOPTED ON 20
NOVEMBER 1976 IN A NATIONAL REFERENDUM. ON 10 DECEMBER
1976, PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENNE WAS ELECTED HEAD OF STATE WITH
A SIX-YEAR MANDATE; AND ON 25 FEBRUARY 1977 THE FIRST
ALGERIAN PARLIAMENT IN 12 YEARS WAS ELECTED.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONTINUED ITS WORK ON THE CASE OF
FORMER PRESIDENT AHMED BEN BELLA, ADOPTED IN SEPTEMBER
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1967 FOLLOWING HIS OVERTHROW IN JUNE 1965, AND AT PRESENT
UNDER STRICT HOUSE-ARREST. THE ORGANIZATION APPEALED TO
PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENNE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ELECTION
TO RECONSIDER THE CASE OF BEN BELLA AND GRANT HIM HIS
FREEDOM. SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE INDICATION THAT
THESE APPEALS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE.

REPORTS OF THE ARREST AND DETENTION OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS CONTINUED TO REACH THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES, BUT IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO INVESTIGATE AND CONFIRM THEM AND FEW DETAILS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS IN ALGERIA HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE.

IN JANUARY 1977, THE ORGANIZATION WAS ASKED TO INTERVENE IN THE CASE OF MR. JEAN MACE, A FRENCH NATIONAL AND FORMER EMPLOYEE OF SONATIBA CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN ALGIERS, WHO HAD BEEN HELD IN ORAN PRISON FOR OVER 18 MONTHS WITHOUT TRIAL. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THIS LONG PERIOD OF DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL, AND IN JANUARY 1977 APPEALED TO THE ALGERIAN MINISTER OF JUSTICE TO BRING MR. MACE TO TRIAL OR RELEASE HIM. NO RESPONSE HAS BEEN RECEIVED.

EARLY IN 1977, THE ORGANIZATION RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT DR. ABIAD, A DOCTOR AND LEBANESE NATIONAL. IT WAS REPORTED THAT DR. ABIAD, AGED 63, WAS ARRESTED IN DECEMBER 1974 AND DETAINED IN A MILITARY PRISON IN CONSTANTIN UNTIL MARCH 1976 WHEN HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO BERROUGHIA PRISON. DR. ABIAD WAS EMPLOYED BY THE SOCIETE NATIONALE DE SIDERURGIE AT THE EL HADJAR FACTORY. THE REASON FOR HIS ARREST AND SUBSEQUENT DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL WAS NOT KNOWN. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MADE ENQUIRIES AT THE ALGERIAN AND LEBANESE DIPLOMATIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MISSIONS BOTH IN LONDON AND PARIS, ALSO DIRECTLY ASKED THE ALGERIAN AUTHORITIES FOR INFORMATION, BUT WITH LITTLE RESULT. INQUIRIES INTO THE CASE ARE STILL BEING MADE.

MR. MUSTAPHA BZIOUIT, A MOROCCAN JOURNALIST, WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN DETAINED IN AN ALGERIAN MILITARY PRISON SINCE JANUARY 1976 UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S SOURCES OF INFORMATION DESCRIBED AS ALARMING. ALTHOUGH THE REASONS FOR MR. BZIOUIT'S DETENTION WERE NOT KNOWN, THE ORGANIZATION WAS CONCERNED ABOUT REPORTS THAT HE HAD BEEN SEVERELY TORTURED AND HAD NOT BEEN BROUGHT TO TRIAL. SO FAR, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S INQUIRIES HAVE YIELDED NO RESULTS BUT THE CASE IS STILL BEING INVESTIGATED. END QUOTE.

2. DEPARTMENT WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY COMMENT ON REPORT, INCLUDING ANY INFORMATION WHICH DIFFERS FROM BASIC FACTS CONTAINED IN REPORT.
VANCE

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